Media Statement
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Infrastructure providers require national support to manage risks

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The New Zealand Infrastructure Commission/Te Waihanga's report *Invest or insure? Preparing infrastructure for natural hazards* is a reminder of the significant work required to support infrastructure providers to successfully manage the risks associated with adverse natural events.

"The report correctly identifies the critical role that infrastructure providers play in our country's preparedness for future adverse natural events and the choices they have to reduce the structural and fiscal risks associated with those," says Infrastructure New Zealand's Advocacy and Strategy Lead Martina Moroney.

"The fact is that none of the choices are easy and no one-size-fits-all."

"Different infrastructure in different places faces different risks and the decision of an infrastructure manager to invest in resilience, focus on managing the fiscal risks through insurance, or defer action until after a potential event occurs may all be viable options depending on the circumstances."

"It is encouraging that the Government has recently committed to progressing policy development on a national adaptation framework and will introduce legislation later this year," Moroney says. "Infrastructure providers, including local government, require more clarity about the role of central government and a better indication of where responsibilities and costs lie."

Along with a national adaptation framework Infrastructure New Zealand is recommending that the Government develop a set of national level resilience standards to inform local government planning and establish a single entity to coordinate recovery and adaptation planning (based on the Queensland Reconstruction Authority).

"To assist councils and other infrastructure providers accurately assess the risks they face, make informed decisions and have more confidence in their investment and risk mitigation measures, better quality and standardised data is also required," Moroney says. "This point is emphasised in the Infrastructure Commission's research, and it is our recommendation that improved data standards must come alongside requirements to return data to the Government on major publicly funded projects"

"Like the rest of the world, New Zealand's risk profile is rapidly evolving, with adverse events happening more frequently. Infrastructure that is either resilient to natural hazards or can be repaired or replaced at a reasonable cost will be important."

"To support local government and other infrastructure providers get these decisions right we must introduce greater use of national planning instruments and gain clarity on which agency is leading this work," Moroney says.

Infrastructure New Zealand is holding an Infrastructure Resilience Conference in March that will focus on New Zealand's resilience and adaptation planning and how we can build greater community level adaptability. The conference will also address the all-important question of 'who pays?' Speakers include experts on managed retreat, insurance and resilience, and will also feature key Government ministers and Opposition MPs.

Tickets for the 18-19 March conference in Auckland are available at https://brightstar.co.nz/events/infrastructureresilience/.

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Infrastructure New Zealand is Aotearoa's peak membership organisation for the infrastructure sector. We promote best practice in national infrastructure development through research, advocacy, and public and private sector collaboration. We promote public and media discussion on issues of importance to the infrastructure sector. Our membership is comprised of around 140 organisations, including government agencies, consultants, contractors, financiers, utilities, and academics. These organisations employ approximately 150,000 people in infrastructure-related roles and are united in their commitment to creating a better New Zealand through outstanding infrastructure.

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